

Your recycling frequently asked questions – answered

Can I put bottles in the recycling with their lids on?

No – please take all lids off bottles before putting them in your recycling sack, and please don't put the loose lids in the recycling. Because of the way your recycling is sorted by machine, bottle tops end up mixed up with our glass. This means that they won't be recycled, and they make the glass more difficult to recycle too.

If you don't want to put bottle tops into your black rubbish sacks, you can collect them and take them to Lush shops or to a local Scrapstore where they can be reused.

Why can't I recycle shredded paper?

It doesn't seem logical does it, it's paper after all! There are two reasons why we ask you not to recycle shredded paper. First, when it gets into our machines the pieces are too small to be sorted with the other paper, and it can clog the machines and contaminate the glass. Secondly, when paper is shredded the fibres in it are cut very short which makes it difficult to recycle.

Only shred the parts of documents with address/ account details on them, not the whole document. You can put shredded paper into your home compost bin, or use it for packing materials. Otherwise it needs to go in your black bag to be incinerated.

Why can't I put broken glass in my recycling sack?

Broken glass jars and bottles in your recycling sack are a safety risk for the people collecting and sorting the recycling. Please wrap broken glass securely in newspaper before putting into your rubbish sack or bin.

Other types of glass – broken or not – can't be put in your recycling. Glass used in kitchenware may have different melting points to glass bottles and jars so can't be recycled with them.

Which plastics can I recycle?

Lots of plastic packaging can be recycled in your clear sack, but not all. If you have food or drink packaging that is made out of rigid plastic, it can be recycled. So plastic bottles, yogurt pots, margarine tubs, meat trays (cleaned), fruit punnets and ready meal trays can all go in your recycling sack. Don't forget bottles from the bathroom, and cleaning products, they can all be recycled too.

Plastic that is 'scrunchy', i.e. you can crush it into a ball easily, can't be recycled. So crisp packets, biscuit and sweet wrappers, bread wrappers, inner bags from cereal packets, cling film and plastic film from ready meals and fruit punnets/meat trays etc. go into your black bag.

Please make sure there is no food left in any of your plastic containers before putting them in the recycling. Some types of plastic film can be taken to supermarkets for recycling with carrier bags.

Can I put carrier bags into my recycling sack?

No, please don't put carrier bags into your recycling. When your recycling is sorted, the clear sacks are removed by hand, not by machine. Too many plastic bags overwhelms our system, and the bags can get wrapped around both the machinery in the MRF (Materials Recycling Facility) and other materials which makes the sorting process less effective.

Use bags for life or cloth bags to do your shopping, and cut out carrier bags – or reuse them. Old carriers that are no longer fit to be used can be recycled at supermarkets.

What about other things made from plastic, why can't I recycle them?

Our sorting machines are designed to detect certain types and shapes of plastic. Items that are not food and drink packaging are likely to be made of other types of plastic, or of mixed materials. These could end up contaminating our recycling, or damaging our machines. Things like plastic toys, phones, plastic tubing, kettles, coat hangers and plant pots can't be recycled in your clear bag.

Why can't I put foil in my recycling sack?

Our machines aren't able to separate foil from other materials. Foil that has food scraps on it also causes contamination of our paper.

Please reuse foil where possible before putting in your black refuse sack or rubbish bin.

Do I need to take the plastic film out of window envelopes before I recycle them?

No, these will be removed at the paper mill further down the recycling process.

Do I need to take the labels off bottles, jars and cans?

No, again these will be removed later on in the recycling process.

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